

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-30. (canceled).

31. (previously presented): A device for fixing a toner image on a recording medium, comprising:

a first roller, comprising:

a heat source;

a rotatable, cylindrical first core member;

a first elastic member, rotatable together with the first core member;

a first rubber layer, secured to an outer periphery of the first core member; and

a second roller, comprising:

a rotatable, cylindrical second core member;

a second elastic member, rotatable together with the second core member; and

a second rubber layer, secured to an outer periphery of the second core member, and

brought into contact with the first rubber layer to form a nip portion therebetween through which the recording medium is passed, and such that one of the first roller and the second roller is rotated by the rotation of the other;

wherein the first elastic member and the second elastic member are brought into contact with each other at a position other than the nip portion;

the first elastic member has a hardness which is lower than a hardness of the first rubber layer; and

the second elastic member has a hardness which is lower than a hardness of the second rubber layer.

32. (previously presented): A device for fixing a toner image on a recording medium, comprising:

a first roller, comprising:

a heat source;

a rotatable, cylindrical first core member;

a first elastic member, rotatable together with the first core member;

a first rubber layer, secured to an outer periphery of the first core member; and

a heat-resistant belt member, stretched by a second roller and a stretcher and circulated therearound, the second roller, comprising:

a rotatable, cylindrical second core member;

a second elastic member, rotatable together with the second core member; and

a second rubber layer, secured to an outer periphery of the second core member,

wherein:

the belt member is brought into contact with the first rubber layer to form a nip portion therebetween through which the recording medium is passed;

the first elastic member and the second elastic member are brought into contact with each other at a position other than the nip portion;

the first elastic member has a hardness which is lower than a hardness of the first rubber layer; and

the second elastic member has a hardness which is lower than a hardness of the second rubber layer.

33-34. (canceled).

35. (original): The fixing device as set forth in claim 31, further comprising:

a first support member, which rotatably supports the first roller; and

a second support member, which rotatably supports the second roller, wherein:

the first elastic member is arranged closer to a longitudinal end of the first roller than the first support member; and

the second elastic member is arranged closer to a longitudinal end of the second roller than the second support member.

36. (original): The fixing device as set forth in claim 32, further comprising:

a first support member, which rotatably supports the first roller; and

a second support member, which rotatably supports the second roller, wherein:

the first elastic member is arranged closer to a longitudinal end of the first roller than the first support member; and

the second elastic member is arranged closer to a longitudinal end of the second roller than the second support member.

37. (original): The fixing device as set forth in claim 35, wherein:

the first support member and the first elastic member are provided at each of longitudinal ends of the first roller; and

the second support member and the second elastic member are provided at each of longitudinal ends of the second roller.

38. (original): The fixing device as set forth in claim 36, wherein:

the first support member and the first elastic member are provided at each of longitudinal ends of the first roller; and

the second support member and the second elastic member are provided at each of longitudinal ends of the second roller.

39. (original): An image forming apparatus for forming a toner image on a recording medium, the apparatus comprising the device for fixing the toner image on the recording medium, as set forth in claim 31.

40. (original): An image forming apparatus for forming a toner image on a recording medium, the apparatus comprising the device for fixing the toner image on the recording medium, as set forth in claim 32.